



Town of *Westford* Massachusetts

Town Manager's Newsletter

November 2013



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Town
Manager

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978-692-5500

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Council on Aging
Holiday Basket Program
Pages 3

Library adds IndieFlix
offering for cardholders
Page 5

Holiday Food
Preparation Safety Tips
Page 6

Lil' Iguana Live/
Child Safety
Program
November 20th
Page 11



Watch Meetings Online

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Dear Westford residents,

Our fall special town meeting was held on October 21 and 22 with the results of the meeting available at this link: [Special Town Meeting Results](#). Thank you to all who attended to help us conduct the business of our town.

On November 12th, I presented the FY15 Annual Town Operating and Capital Budgets to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee. The weekly Finance Committee/Board of Selectmen review of these budgets will begin on Thursday November 14th. We have experienced signs of economic recovery which improved our financial condition from our projections last spring. The schools will receive a 4.58% increase and the town departments will receive a 4.44% increase. We are proposing to establish a Health Insurance Stabilization Fund this year to enable us to reduce our health insurance budget from a 12% to an 8% increase. I have proposed funding \$2.5M in capital appropriations this year, with \$500,000 to Capital Stabilization in anticipation of our town facilities study recommendations. We funded Other Post Retirement Benefits (OPEB) at \$500,000 with the Water Enterprise fully funding their OPEB liabilities. We increased the Snow & Ice Budget to \$400,000, are transferring the Wastewater Treatment Plants to a new budget (from the School Department), are increasing the Veteran's Service by \$42,000, restoring the library funding to meet Municipal Appropriation Requirements (MAR), and we are funding perchlorate remediation with \$250,000. Each department's budget provides a mission statement, organizational chart, and goals, along with an explanation of any significant changes. All budget materials are available at this link: [FY15 Town Budget](#).

On October 15th, State Representative Jim Arciero, the Selectmen, Westford Academy Principal Jim Antonelli, and I were invited by Sustainable Westford (Farmers Market) to attend a ceremony showing our appreciation of Westford Academy students who volunteer to keep the market running smoothly.



*Westford Farmers Market thanks Westford Academy student volunteers
for a successful year.*

(Continued on next page)

WWW.WESTFORDMA.GOV

On October 27th, State Representative Jim Arciero, the Selectmen and I were invited to honor the five firefighters who had received promotions over the past several months. Congratulations to Captain David O'Keefe, Captain Mark Valcourt, Lieutenant Daniel Britko, Lieutenant Shawn Girard, and Lieutenant Paul Lemieux on their promotions and for their significant contributions to the Fire Department.



Fire Chief Joseph Targ (Interim), Capt. Dave O'Keefe, Capt. Mark Valcourt, Lt. Paul Lemieux, Lt. Dan Britko, Lt. Shawn Girard

On October 31st several state and local officials were invited to meet Circle Health/Lowell General Hospital officials to discuss the new location in Westford, across from Cornerstone. This new 22,000 square foot facility will house primary care and specialist physicians, offer some specialty services, and an urgent care center. The plan is to open their new facility this spring.

The FEMA Region 1 office in Boston has been working on a senior preparedness program called Secrets of Survival (SOS). FEMA began developing this program after Hurricane Sandy when many of the deaths were people over the age of 65. FEMA is developing a checklist, a wallet card for people to fill in key contact information, and some other emergency preparedness resources. FEMA has sent some of this information to the state's Executive Office of Elder Affairs and then to local Councils on Aging.

The real estate agents from the Westford office of Coldwell Banker presented The Friends of the Cameron Senior Center, Inc with a generous donation to assist with the fuel assistance program this year (photo page 4).

At the October 29 and November 12th Board of Selectmen meetings, bow hunting on the Tadmuck Swamp North parcel was debated, culminating in the board granting one bow hunting permit (with several conditions) to Shawn Girard. The board plans to discuss hunting on town land at their next meeting on November 26th, with the probability of establishing a Hunting Policy Committee to develop updated policies on this issue.

On November 7th the League of Women Voters celebrated their 45th anniversary at the lovely home of Ellen Harde. Congratulations to the League for over four decades of accomplishments for our town.

On November 11th State and Local officials were joined by residents on the common to honor our veterans. It was a beautiful fall day and our veterans agent Terry Stader coordinated a memorable community wide celebration (see pictures on page 14).

Over the past couple of months, several town staff and residents have formed a "Healthy Lakes & Ponds Collaborative" with the goal of preserving these important natural resources. A flyer will be included in the 1st quarter tax bills with educational materials surrounding protecting our bodies of water (see page 10).

At a recent meeting, NMCOG presented their Study of Town Center Parking. There will be a public forum at the J.V. Fletcher Library on December 4th from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. to present their report and seek public input before returning to the Board of Selectmen.

The move of an historic home across the street on Chamberlain Road will occur on November 21st, with November 22 and 23rd as rain dates. The town is assisting the coordination of this effort with the homeowner, utility companies, public safety and the schools, and unfortunately the residents in that area will experience a power outage that may last several hours while the house is moved. Stay tuned to our website for updated notices.

I wish you and your loved ones a very happy Thanksgiving.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jodi Ross".

Jodi Ross

Council on Aging News

Fuel Assistance Applications

Fuel assistance recertification applications for those receiving fuel assistance last year were mailed directly to you from CTI earlier this year. You should have completed and returned the application to them. New applicants' appointments are now being accepted at the Senior Center for all residents by calling 978-692-5523.

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Maximum Gross Income</u>
1	\$32,065
2	\$41,932
3	\$51,798
4	\$61,664

Medicare Open Enrollment

Open enrollment period ends December 7. Call to set up a SHINE appointment if you need assistance reviewing your health insurance options at 978-692-5523.

Holiday Basket Program

Holiday baskets for residents in need are coordinated through the Council on Aging at the Cameron Senior Center. These baskets are all donated and truly a community effort. Approximately 100 households each holiday will request baskets of food or food and gifts for the upcoming holidays. We anticipate additional families in need to reach out to us and want to be sure that we can meet their request. If you are willing to contribute a food basket, gifts for a family, gift cards, monetary donation or conduct a food drive please contact us at jsheehan@westfordma.gov to request an application to donate be sent to you. We can be reached Monday through Friday at 978-692-5523.

Baskets are distributed for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We are looking for individuals, families, friends, businesses and clubs to adopt a family for the 2013 holiday. Our families are local and range from a home bound individual to families of eight under one roof. The names of the families are always kept confidential.

If you are in need of a holiday basket and have not received an application please contact us with your name and mailing address at 978-692-5523 ASAP. We hope to make all of the matches in early November but it is never too late to apply. If you are an active client of St. Vincent DePaul please apply through that organization only.

Volunteers are welcome to assist us in lifting these items on Sunday, November 24 and or Sunday, December 15 from 11 AM – 3 PM at the George Rogers Fire Station, Town Farm Rd., rear parking lot. This is a great opportunity for students in need of Community Service hours.



Beautifully decorated basket ready to deliver holiday cheer!

Council On Aging - Coming Events

HAM AND BEAN SUPPER

The Annual Ham and Bean Supper will be held at the Franco American Club. Saturday, November 23rd at 6 PM, doors open early. The dinner is being sponsored by the Westford Firefighters Association, the American Legion Post 159 and the Franco American Club. There is no charge for the dinner, but we encourage you to bring an item for the Community Food Pantry. Please pre-register at 978-692-5523.

THANKSGIVING DINNER

Jim Geraghty, family and friends, will host for the fifteenth year, a Turkey Dinner for Westford Seniors age 60 and over. Sunday, November 24th at Westford Academy. Bingo will be from 10 AM - 12 Noon with lunch starting around Noon. Volunteers will serve this full course homemade dinner to you. Seating is limited; reservations are necessary, so please call 978-692-5523.

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

Join us for a catered luncheon (roast pork loin) at the Franco American Club. Wednesday, December 4th. Doors open at 10:30 AM. Lunch will be prepared by Shirley Caterers and served around 11:30 AM. Fee for lunch is \$7 for Westford residents; non-residents \$15. Please Call 978-692-5523 by November 22nd for reservations.



Westford Senior Center

The Real Estate Agents from the Westford office of Coldwell Banker present The Friends of the Cameron Senior Center, Inc with a generous donation to assist with the fuel assistance program this year.

To view the complete Council On Aging Newsletter please visit our website at: www.westfordma.gov/coa and click on [Newsletters](#).

J. V. Fletcher Library News

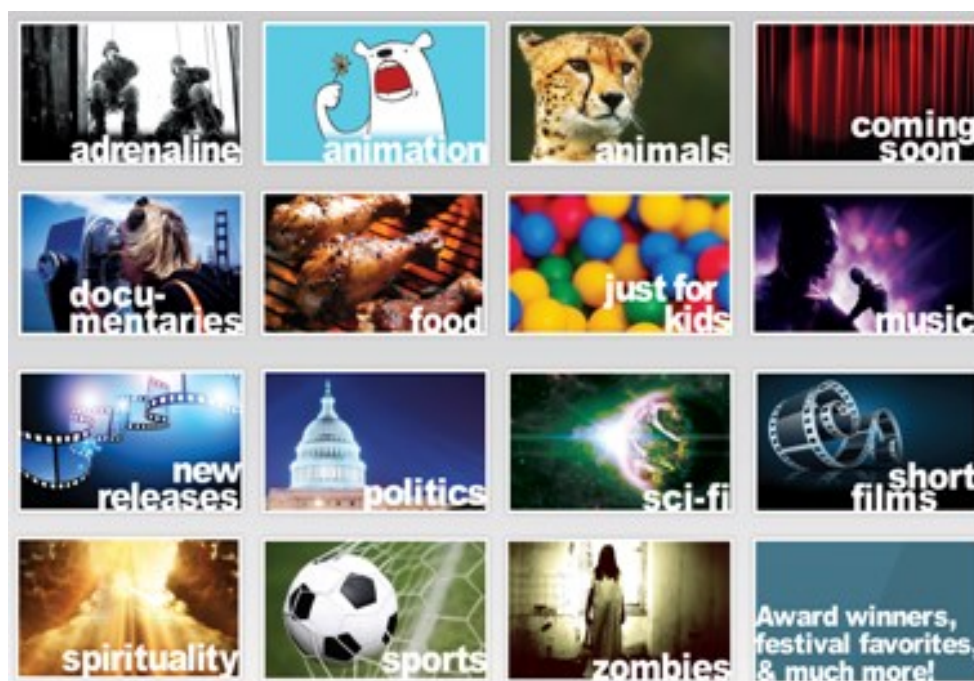
PRESENTING:



The "Netflix of Independent Films"

The Library is pleased to offer Westford Library cardholders an online streaming service of award-winning independent films, features, shorts, and documentaries that were debuted at 2,000 film festivals worldwide.

Our collection contains films for all ages and tastes: they are eclectic, artistic, imaginative, dark, fun, political and/or controversial. They can be searched by genre, country, film festival, intended audience and much more. Further, and we love this, watching films on IndieFlix directly supports the filmmakers who produced the films!



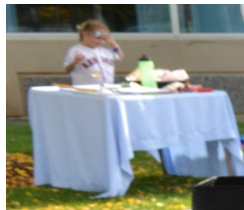
Go to the Library's web site at www.westfordlibrary.org and read how to login. We also have fliers at the Library with detailed instructions. Just an important footnote: IndieFlix films can only be viewed on Internet enabled computers, tablets and mobile devices through the following web browsers: Internet Explorer 10, Google Chrome, Safari or Mozilla Firefox. Discover, journey and enjoy.

Health Department News

Emerson Hospital Collaborates with Health Department / Upper Merrimack Valley MRC to Hold Successful Family Health & Wellness Expo

Hundreds of local families enjoyed the Family Health & Wellness Expo hosted by Emerson Hospital in partnership with the Westford Health and Police Departments on October 5 at Emerson Westford Health Center. The event featured 20 free health screenings, bike and car seat safety tips, safe mercury disposal, flu shots, fitness demonstrations, face and finger painting and more and educational materials.

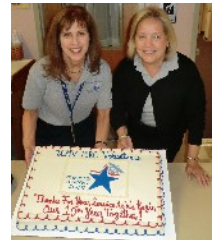
"We were very pleased to work alongside the Westford Health and Police Departments this year," said Christine Schuster, president and CEO of Emerson. "Our highest priority is promoting the well-being of local families, and they were the perfect partners to assist in this endeavor."



Health Department News (continued)

Upper Merrimack Valley MRC Celebrates 10 year Anniversary at Annual Appreciation Dinner

Sixty UMV MRC volunteers participated in a Member Appreciation event recently to thank them for their service throughout the past year. Guest speakers included the Director of Middlesex Community College's Homeland Security program, a Westford resident and nurse practitioner who'd served as the leader of a medical sweep team at the 4/15/13 Boston Marathon, and a psychologist member of the unit who described her experiences from her recent 'Doctors Without Borders' mission to the Congo.



Holiday Tree Ornaments Available

The Health Department will again be selling WASA (Westford Against Substance Abuse) Christmas Ornaments. There are 6 different ornaments of buildings in the Town of Westford. They include The Library, Town Hall, a collage of locations, Westford Academy, Kimball's Farm and Nashoba Ski Area. The cost of the ornament will be \$20 and checks can be made out to WASA, which is a 501c3 tax exempt organization.



Visit the WASA website at: westford.com/wasa

Health Department News - Holiday Food Safety Tips

It's the holidays! Time for turkey dinners and decking the halls with boughs of holly. This season of goodwill and giving thanks is also a festive celebration of food.

With so many delightful foods to choose from, it's important to keep holiday treats safe from the invisible enemy: bacteria. You can't see, taste, or smell bacteria, but it can be on food and multiply rapidly in moist, warm conditions. If consumed, harmful bacteria can cause foodborne illness.

Be cautious of eggs! Around the holidays, people eat a variety of foods, some of which may contain uncooked or lightly-cooked eggs. But even 'grade A' eggs with clean, uncracked shells can be contaminated with *Salmonella* Enteritidis bacteria. That's why it's important to cook eggs thoroughly to kill any bacteria that may be present.

Join in the festivities and ensure a safe holiday feasting season for you, your family, and your friends by following these food safety tips.

Safe Turkey Preparation Tips

Clean your hands and food surfaces often

- Wash your hands with hot soapy water before you touch the turkey and after you use the bathroom, change diapers, and play with pets.
- Wash all cutting boards, dishes, kitchen tools and counter tops with hot soapy water after you finish fixing the turkey.

Separate foods - don't cross-contaminate

- Place the turkey below other foods in your refrigerator in order to prevent other foods from becoming contaminated with juices from the turkey.
- Use a separate cutting boards for cooked foods and raw foods.
- Never put the cooked turkey on the unwashed plate that previously held the uncooked turkey.

Cook foods to safe temperatures

- Cook the turkey thoroughly. Use a food thermometer to check for doneness.
- Cook whole turkey unstuffed (or dark meat only) to 180°F
- Cook a turkey breast to 170°F

Chill foods promptly

- It is best to thaw the turkey in the refrigerator, NOT at room temperature.
- Put prepared foods and leftover turkey in the refrigerator within two hours.
- Split large amounts of leftovers into small bowls and cool them in the refrigerator.



Holiday Food Safety Video (click to launch)

Be sure to thaw a whole turkey in the refrigerator:

<u>Weight of turkey</u>	<u>Days to thaw in fridge</u>
8 to 12 pounds	1 to 2 days
12 to 16 pounds	2 to 3 days
16 to 20 pounds	3 to 4 days
20 to 24 pounds	4 to 5 days

In a pinch you can also thaw the turkey in cold water.

Cook thawed turkey immediately.

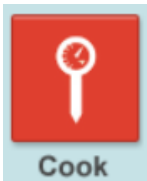
Health Department News - Holiday Food Safety Tips (continued)



- Wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling any food.
- Wash food-contact surfaces (cutting boards, dishes, utensils, countertops) with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables thoroughly under cool running water and use a produce brush to remove surface dirt.
- Do not rinse raw meat and poultry before cooking in order to avoid spreading bacteria to areas around the sink and countertops.



- When shopping in the store, storing food in the refrigerator at home, or preparing meals, keep foods that won't be cooked separate from raw eggs, meat, poultry or seafood—and from kitchen utensils used for those products.
- Consider using one cutting board only for foods that will be cooked (such as raw meat, poultry, and seafood) and another one for those that will not (such as raw fruits and vegetables).
- Do not put cooked meat or other food that is ready to eat on an unwashed plate that has held any raw eggs, meat, poultry, seafood, or their juices.



- Use a food thermometer to make sure meat, poultry, and fish are cooked to a safe internal temperature.
- To check a turkey for safety, insert a food thermometer into the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast. The turkey is safe when the temperature reaches 165°F. If the turkey is stuffed, the temperature of the stuffing should be 165°F.
- Bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a rolling boil when reheating.
- Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. When making your own eggnog or other recipe calling for raw eggs, use pasteurized shell eggs, liquid or frozen pasteurized egg products, or powdered egg whites.
- Don't eat uncooked cookie dough, which may contain raw eggs.



- Refrigerate leftovers and takeout foods—and any type of food that should be refrigerated, including pie—within two hours.
- Set your refrigerator at or below 40°F and the freezer at 0°F. Check both periodically with an appliance thermometer.
- Thaw frozen food safely in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave—never at room temperature.
- Cook food thawed in cold water or in the microwave immediately.
- Allow enough time to properly thaw food. For example, a 20-pound turkey needs four to five days to thaw completely in the refrigerator. (See chart on previous page)
- Don't taste food that looks or smells questionable. When in doubt, throw it out.
- Leftovers should be used within three to four days, unless frozen.



KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFER FROM FOOD POISONING
Check your steps at FoodSafety.gov



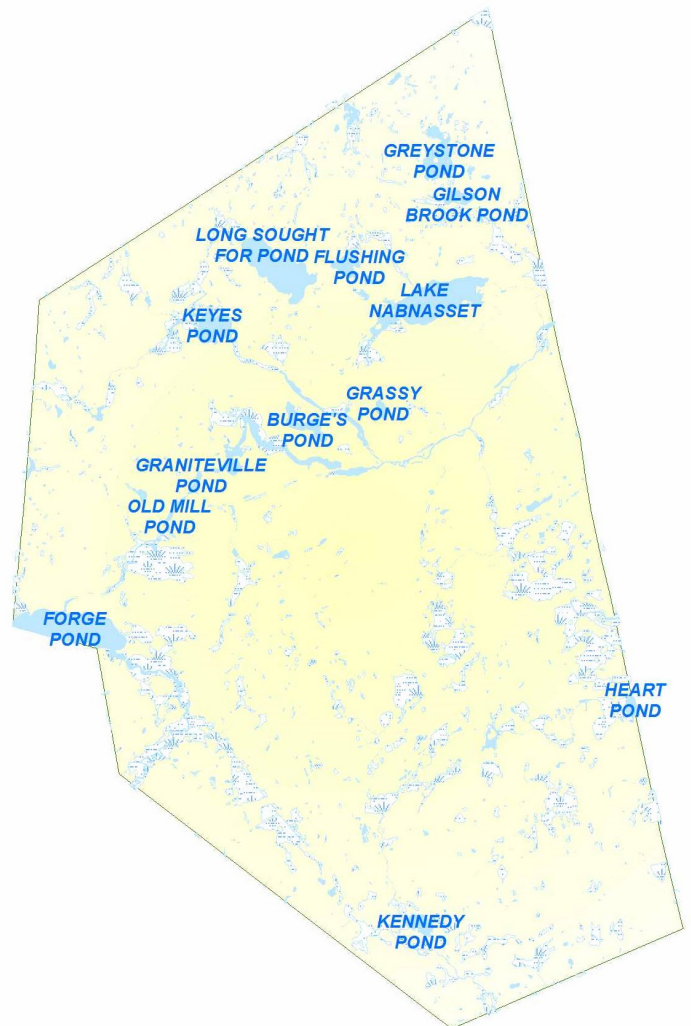
Health Department News (continued)

Westford's Healthy Lakes and Ponds Collaborative

The Westford Health Department has coordinated with town staff, residents, and lake/pond association members to form a collaborative of interested parties to help improve and maintain the health of Westford's Lakes and Ponds.

Overfeeding our lawns can green our rivers and ponds. Applying more fertilizer than the label recommends or your soil needs will not improve your lawn, and instead the extra fertilizer may wash off into nearby waterways. Just as fertilizer helps plants grow on the land, it encourages algae and other aquatic plants to grow in water. Dense weeds and algae reduce oxygen in the water. Dense weeds and algae reduce oxygen in the water, which in turn harms fish and other aquatic life. Extra nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen that are found in fertilizers can cause blue-green algae blooms and the blooms can have major impacts on animals, aquatic life, our water bodies, wells, humans, and our recreational lifestyles. Green water is also much less attractive for boating, swimming and other recreation practices. Some ways you can help.....

- **Calibrate your spreader.**
- **Leave grass clippings on the lawn to lessen the need for fertilizer.**
- **Use fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides sparingly. Sweep and overspray back onto the lawn.**
- **Mow 2.5-3 inches high with a sharp blade to encourage dense growth and deter weeds.**
- **Never discard yard or pet waste down storm drains or into waterways.**
- **Water deeply and infrequently, and time watering to avoid evaporation and runoff.**
- **Reseed bare areas with drought-tolerant varieties of grass.**
- **If you hire a lawn care contractor, speak with him or her about their application practices.**



Health Department News (continued)**LIL' IGUANA LIVE!
CHILD SAFETY PROGRAM**

The Westford Health Department invites families in the community to a "Children's Safety Event". The Lil' Iguana's Children's Safety Foundation will be performing its award-winning educational program, *Lil' Iguana Live* starting at 6:30. This 45-minute live stage show focuses on the importance of childhood safety and well-being through dance, storytelling, music, and role playing while featuring the costumed character, Lil' Iguana. This highly interactive show reinforces crucial safety messages such as; "Street Smarts", "Wearing the Gear", "Get Permission", "Take a Buddy with You", "Who is a Stranger" and "Run, Yell and Tell".

Date: Wed, November 20, 2013

Time: 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm (show is 45 minutes long with time for photos / autographs after show)

Location: Blanchard Middle School – 14 West St.

Cost: Free

Age: Pre-K to Grade 2

Advanced reservations recommended.
Call the Health Department at 978 692-5509 to sign up or email intothewoods3@comcast.net.

LIL' IGUANA LIVE!**SPONSORED BY**

Westford Health and
Police Department



Recreation Department News

The Recreation Department's Westford Partnership for Children (WPC) Afterschool Enrichment Program at Crisafulli theme for November is "Fall into Giving"



The WPC Crisafulli will be hosting a donation box for the Lowell Humane Society and other animal shelters throughout the Month of November. We will be collecting various items for the animals out there who need our help. The children and staff are very excited to start collecting.

To donate participants choose a paw from the giving wall and place selected items in the collection box. Michelle Collette, Site Director states this is the time of year we all think about giving and the children thought helping animal shelters for November would be a good learning experience.

The giving continues in December with items for infants being collected.

Field Trip!

Field Trip to the Museum of Science November 26 (for students K-5) is due by 6PM on November 19. The Museum has just opened its most recent interactive exhibit Hall of Human Life.

Registration forms are available at the WPC sites, Dept. Office, and on-line at www.westfordrec.com (clicking on your child's school and click on special program).

Included in the trips is an authentic steam locomotive experience through Canada's rugged wilderness in the IMAX presentation Rocky Mountain Express.

Westford Parks and Recreation 2013

Junior Tennis Tournament

Held at Stony Brook Courts in August:

Final Results:

1st Place for 18U Category was Frank Zhang (not pictured).

1st Place for 14U, Thomas Welham, 2nd Place, Victoria Donescu.

Trophies and medals were awarded for players pictured on right:

Bottom row (L to R): Carter Amidon, Maeve Proulx, Caleb Amidon, Thomas Welham.

Top row (L to R): Manisha Ramprasad, Jonathan Cao, Victoria Donescu, Jerry Ding and Shray Gurtata.



Engineering Department Update

Construction Update

E.H. Perkins recently completed the new stone wall at the intersection of Littleton Road and Boston Road, locally known as Minot's Corner. This area was originally scheduled for a concrete modular block wall and a steep grass slope, but in September, the Board of Selectmen voted to have the stone wall constructed in an effort to improve the aesthetic quality of this heavily traveled intersection. Funding for the wall was provided through the Route 110 Corridor Gift Account, including a contribution from the Gutierrez Company of Tech Park West.

Perkins also completed temporary repairs to create a two lane transition from the Cornerstone Square driveway into the Minot's Corner intersection. Prior to the repairs, one lane abruptly ended and made it difficult for vehicles to merge back into traffic.



*Stone retaining walls were completed last week
at Boston Road and Littleton Road.*

Commuters can subscribe to email notifications of scheduled traffic delays at www.westfordma.gov/110, or follow us on Twitter @Westfordtraffic.

Veterans Day Ceremonies - 2013

